

Tapinocephalus

Tapinocephalus ("humble head") is an extinct genus of large herbivorous dinocephalians that lived during the Middle Permian Period. These stocky, barrel-bodied animals were characterised by a massive bony skull roof and short weak snout. It is thought that, like the rest of the members of its family, the animals engaged in head-butting intraspecific behavior, possibly for territory or mates.

The fossil remains (skull and postcranial elements) of *Tapinocephalus* are known from the Lower, Middle, and Upper part of the *Tapinocephalus* Assemblage Zone (Capitanian age) of the Lower Beaufort Beds of the South African Karoo. Only the type species, *T. atherstonei* is now considered valid for this genus.

In life, these animals were over 3 metres (10 ft) in length and massed around 1.5 to 2 tonnes (3,300 to 4,400 lb), making them among the largest animals of their time.

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Classification

Tapinocephalus atherstonei is known from a number of skulls and postcranial bones. The skull is large with a heavily pachyostotic skull roof, a massive bony frontals and a short weak *Moschops*-like snout. *Taurops* is a synonym. *Phacosaurus megischion* is another synonym differing only in that the transition from the frontals to the snout is not abrupt.

See also

- [List of therapsids](#)

Sources

- Boonstra, L.D. 1956, "The skull of *Tapinocephalus* and its near relatives" *Annals of the South African Museum*, 43 Part 3 pp. 137–169, 17 figs, plate 4.

Tapinocephalus

Temporal range:

Guadalupian epoch, Capitanian stage

PreЄ Є O S D C P T J K PgN



Scientific classification

Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Chordata
Clade:	Therapsida
Suborder:	†Dinocephalia
Family:	†Tapinocephalidae
Subtribe:	†Tapinocephalina
Genus:	† <i>Tapinocephalus</i> Owen, 1876
Species:	† <i>T. atherstonei</i>

Binomial name

†*Tapinocephalus atherstonei*
Owen, 1876

Synonyms

- *Phacosaurus*
- *Taurops*



Tapinocephalus atherstonei shoulder girdle and front limb, specimen 5611.

- ----- 1969. The fauna of the *Tapinocephalus* Zone (Beaufort beds of the Karoo). *Ann. S. Afr. Mus.* 56:1–73.
- King, Gillian M., 1988 "Anomodontia" Part 17 C, Encyclopedia of Paleoherpetology, Gutsav Fischer Verlag, Stuttgart and New York.

External links

- [Tapinocephalia - *Tapinocephalus* \(https://web.archive.org/web/20060318154122/http://www.palaeos.com/Vertebrates/Units/400Therapsida/650.html#Tapinocephalus\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20060318154122/http://www.palaeos.com/Vertebrates/Units/400Therapsida/650.html#Tapinocephalus) - Palaeos

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